



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, III  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

CONTACT JASON MILLER  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER  
PHONE (302) 577-8949  
CELL (302) 893-8939  
Jason.Miller@state.de.us

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**Department of Justice secures the cleanup of a Sussex County nuisance property**

**Wilmington, DE** – For the first time, social vice activity at a Delaware property has ceased through the Delaware Department of Justice’s enforcement of Delaware’s Nuisance Abatement Act. The Department announced today that, following a lengthy investigation, all activity resembling adult entertainment will cease at the Canton Inn and the property owner will take other measures to comply with the law.

“Today marks an important milestone in our enforcement of Delaware’s Nuisance Abatement Law,” said State Solicitor Lawrence Lewis. “The Delaware Attorney General’s office is using this statute in new and innovative ways to combat social vice crime in our neighborhoods. As a result, this property will no longer be a haven for illegal activity.”

The Department of Justice alleges that the Canton Inn, at 704 Norman Eskridge Highway in Seaford, has been the site of prostitution and lewd sexual conduct over a period of several years. Following an investigation by the Delaware State Division of Professional Regulation and the Delaware State Police, the Department of Justice determined that the property presented an immediate threat to the public health, safety and welfare. Rather than defend itself against the Department in court, the owner agreed to abate the nuisance voluntarily by ceasing all adult entertainment activity, making renovations to the building, and discontinuing advertising as a “gentlemen’s club”. The establishment will now be promoted as a restaurant and bar.

“The residents of Seaford will benefit greatly from this agreement,” stated Representative Daniel B. Short, Seaford. “This is exactly how the Nuisance Abatement statute should work and I commend the Attorney General’s Office for their efforts.”

In August, 2007 Attorney General Beau Biden launched a statewide effort to fight neighborhood crime in Delaware under the state’s Drug Nuisance and Social Vices Abatement Act. Under the Nuisance Abatement Act, enforcement actions can take a variety of forms, including closure of a property. In September, 2008 a property in Wilmington was the first to be ordered closed permanently under this Act by court order.

The Delaware Department of Justice identifies nuisance properties statewide through its own investigations and cooperation with state and local police agencies, local authorities, civic associations, and residents. Since August, 2007, the Department has abated 74 nuisances, either by obtaining a court order or through securing the voluntary cooperation of the owner to clean up the illegal activity.

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